

**Proposer Questions
DMH Request for Proposal for an External Quality Review
Organization
December 19, 2003**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Proposal due date has been changed to January 20, 2004. An addendum will be posted on the DMH website. January 19, the original due date, is a State Holiday.
- Proposers should monitor the DMH website for additional information periodically. Proposers submitting a Letter of Intent will automatically receive update information.
- Proposers suggested two additional items be added to the RFP Data Library: the DMH Focus Group Training Manual and a final MHP review report from the DMH Medi-Cal Oversight Unit. These will be available from the Data Library no later than December 26, 2003.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

How many Medi-Cal clients do Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the local Mental Health Plans (MHPs) serve?

DMH doesn't provide direct services except in its mental hospitals. MHPs served slightly more than 400,000 clients during Fiscal Year (FY) 2002/2003.

Will the State make available the backgrounds and names of the evaluation committee members for this procurement available to bidders?

The State will release the names of the Evaluation Panel when the Notice of Intent to Award is posted. Panel members have been advised of this procedure and will decline to speak with any proposers if they are contacted for information.

What is meant by the term "stakeholder" in the Request for Proposal (RFP)?

This is a general term used to describe all of the interested parties who function in the mental health community and have been interested in mental health program related issues in the past. The term is all-inclusive: consumers, family members, DMH, MHPs, providers advocate groups, etc.

Can the State provide an anticipated budget for this Scope of Work?

DMH will not be supplying an anticipated budget. The EQRO activity is being funded a maximum of \$5.6 Million per year. This figure includes Federal Financial Participation (FFP).

What Preference Programs apply to this Request for Proposal (RFP)?

Small Business Preference is the only program that applies to the RFP. The website at www.pd.dgs.ca.gov can provide further information about the Small Business Preference Program.

Does the term “days” in the RFP refer to calendar days or working days?

Unless otherwise indicated in the text, “days” refers to calendar days.

Will DMH make available a list of the participants in the Pre-Proposal Conference?

Yes. DMH will make the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of the attendees available on the DMH website.

What contractors are currently providing External Quality Review (EQR) services for DMH? Will the consultants that assisted with the preparation of the RFP be bidding on the RFP?

The engagement of an External Quality Review Organization (EQRO) is a new activity for DMH. The two consultants who prepared the Performance Measurement and Performance Improvement Protocols will not be allowed to bid on the RFP.

Is the vendor required to have a medical doctor (MD) on the Project Team?

No.

Does the State have any specific requirements on client and family member involvement?

DMH has a strong commitment to client and family member involvement in mental health program operations at both the State and local levels. For the last three years, DMH has conducted annual Focus Groups at MHPs, with the assistance of clients and family members. Clients and family members participate in the DMH Division of Program Compliance, Medi-Cal Oversight program reviews. Unfortunately, due to current budget constraints, Focus Groups have had to be curtailed. DMH is looking to proposers to develop ways in which client and family member viewpoints can inform the various

activities the EQRO would undertake in the RFP. The DMH Focus Group Training Manual will be added to the RFP Data Library.

Will DMH make any recent quality assessments, outcomes and other performance results for mental health available for review?

Yes, results of previous program reviews will be made available to the EQRO. A sample Program Review Report will be added to the RFP Data Library.

Is there an expectation that data validation in Year One and subsequent years comply with CMS protocols?

Yes. However, DMH expects the EQRO to assist in tailoring the protocols to better match the operations of MHPs as the EQRO develops on-site experience. The protocols will always remain consistent to the CMS templates.

What is the relationship between the MHPs and the State Quality Improvement Council (SQIC)?

The SQIC provides consultation and assistance on performance and quality issues to the DMH Systems of Care Division and its Medi-Cal Policy Branch. The SQIC conferred with DMH to determine which performance measures and performance improvement projects would be selected for Year One of EQR. The SQIC reviews statewide data collected and calculated from the claims for services that MHPs submit.

May the EQRO provide the names of contract staff to DMH after the contract has been awarded?

If the proposer will utilize subcontractors or consultants to meet any of the requirements in Items 4,5 and 6 on pages 17-18 of the RFP, they must be identified by name and the proposer must include a Letter of Agreement.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO SPECIFIC PAGES OF THE RFP

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What is meant by periodic evaluation of selected aspects of each MHP's on-going internal QI system?

Beginning in Year One and every third year thereafter, the EQRO, in addition to administering the protocols, will review selected components of the MHPs' on-going QI program. The DMH Compliance Division will provide the protocol

for this review. The ONLY periodic review alluded to in this section is the review of portions of the QI program.

Can you describe the “various DMH data systems” and whether they can be easily accessed and cross analyzed?

The DMH data systems are unique and are not in HIPAA format. DMH doesn't anticipate there will be a problem in analyzing the data in its various systems.

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MHPs are able to choose the Performance Improvement Project (PIP) they would like the EQRO to review. How many and what kinds were selected?

DMH doesn't know what PIPs the MHPs will select for review. PIPs will be selected from the QI work already underway in the MHPs on-going QI program. The on-going QI program requires there to be activities in the annual QI Work Plan that include the following:

- *Monitoring service delivery capability*
- *Monitoring accessibility*
- *Monitoring beneficiary satisfaction*
- *Clinical issues affecting beneficiaries*
- *Continuity and coordination of care with physical health care providers*
- *Monitoring provide appeals*

What is the meaning of the term “compliance review?”

“Compliance review” means the on-site program reviews conducted by the Medi-Cal Oversight Units in the DMH Program Compliance Division. Medicaid managed care regulations require a compliance review of MHPs every three years. The EQRO will be expected to review and evaluate the findings of the most recent compliance review completed by DMH Medi-Cal Oversight staff.

Have there been any assessments already made of the information systems of the MHPs and DMH?

DMH information systems have not been assessed. MHPs may or may not have been assessed. This is not information DMH has available.

Have the MHPs routinely done any type of customer satisfaction surveys that would be available to the EQRO?

MHPs administer the MHSIP Client Satisfaction Survey to Adult Clients. Youth Clients and their caregivers will complete the Youth Services Survey for Youth and/or the Youth Services Survey for Families. By May 2004, the statewide and regional results for the November 2003 Survey Period will be available from DMH.

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What portions of the compliance review is the EQRO responsible for in Activity 9?

This refers only to the EQRO's assessment of the MHP's on-going QI program. The EQRO will complete this review in Year One and every third year thereafter.

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How often does DMH estimate the meetings with the DMH Contract Administrator will occur?

DMH has never administered an EQRO contract before nor have MHPs' QI activities been reviewed by an EQRO. DMH assumes there would be frequent and consistent feedback and communication with the EQRO but it is impossible to estimate at this point how much coordination and consultation will be require. As both parties gain experience DMH will have a knowledge base to make an estimate.

Explain the meaning of "assist DMH...to plan and implement appropriate follow-up activities for each MHP."

The DMH County Operations Units will be responsible for working with MHPs after the EQR is completed. If staff in the County Operations Units don't understand some aspect of the EQRO report or need additional detail, they may need to contact the EQRO. The DMH Contract Administrator will control the number of calls made directly to the EQRO by DMH staff. The intention is that the EQRO, the Medi-Cal Oversight and County Operations Units function as a team in their work with MHPs.

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Does the Project Narrative Example apply to each RFP Activity Numbers 1-22?

Yes – although the format shown is not required.

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The Protocol states, “the review of performance measurement activities contained in this Protocol will take place at both DMH and the MHPs.” If concerns are discovered during the on-site visit, will the contractor be permitted to request sub files of data which may be taken off-site for more extended examination as part of its post-onsite evaluations of information gathered?

DMH data staff will work with the contractor to supply necessary data files with protections that meet HIPAA requirements.

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Please provide additional information about how the EQRO vendor will be given access to DMH data and processes in order to determine the accuracy of numerators.

This is expected to be a DMH on-site activity working with DMH data staff.

Page 57

Will the process of verifying numerators be affected by the conversion to the HIPAA standard code set?

A code translator is in place to crosswalk between the Short-Doyle/Medi-Cal billing codes and HIPAA codes. A HIPAA consultant has determined the DMH crosswalk is HIPAA-compliant. There will be no impact on DMH's calculation of performance measures.

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Is there good DMH claims data on “non-Medi-Cal clients?”

The Client and Services Information System (CSI) provides statistical, not claims-based, data on non-Medi-Cal clients.

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Have all the 55 MHPs submitted preliminary reports to DMH on their study questions in regard to their PIP?

DMH has not requested preliminary reports at this time. Since the EQRO may not be on-site at a particular MHP for some months, it was premature to collect the information. DMH assumed in the RFP that the preliminary report was something the EQRO would want to request from an MHP once a date for an on-site review was set.